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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/669,055	09/24/2003	Yoshiaki Noda	NOG-0017	3382

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EXAMINER

ARANCIBIA, MAUREEN GRAMAGLIA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1763

DATE MAILED: 11/09/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Advisory Action
Before the Filing of an Appeal Brief**

Application No.

10/669,055

Applicant(s)

NODA ET AL.

Examiner

Maureen G. Arancibia

Art Unit

1763

--The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

THE REPLY FILED 24 October 2005 FAILS TO PLACE THIS APPLICATION IN CONDITION FOR ALLOWANCE.

1. ☒ The reply was filed after a final rejection, but prior to or on the same day as filing a Notice of Appeal. To avoid abandonment of this application, applicant must timely file one of the following replies: (1) an amendment, affidavit, or other evidence, which places the application in condition for allowance; (2) a Notice of Appeal (with appeal fee) in compliance with 37 CFR 41.31; or (3) a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) in compliance with 37 CFR 1.114. The reply must be filed within one of the following time periods:

- a) ☐ The period for reply expires _____ months from the mailing date of the final rejection.
b) ☒ The period for reply expires on: (1) the mailing date of this Advisory Action, or (2) the date set forth in the final rejection, whichever is later. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of the final rejection.

Examiner Note: If box 1 is checked, check either box (a) or (b). ONLY CHECK BOX (b) WHEN THE FIRST REPLY WAS FILED WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF THE FINAL REJECTION. See MPEP 706.07(f).

Extensions of time may be obtained under 37 CFR 1.136(a). The date on which the petition under 37 CFR 1.136(a) and the appropriate extension fee have been filed is the date for purposes of determining the period of extension and the corresponding amount of the fee. The appropriate extension fee under 37 CFR 1.17(a) is calculated from: (1) the expiration date of the shortened statutory period for reply originally set in the final Office action; or (2) as set forth in (b) above, if checked. Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of the final rejection, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

NOTICE OF APPEAL

2. ☐ The Notice of Appeal was filed on _____. A brief in compliance with 37 CFR 41.37 must be filed within two months of the date of filing the Notice of Appeal (37 CFR 41.37(a)), or any extension thereof (37 CFR 41.37(e)), to avoid dismissal of the appeal. Since a Notice of Appeal has been filed, any reply must be filed within the time period set forth in 37 CFR 41.37(a).

AMENDMENTS

3. ☐ The proposed amendment(s) filed after a final rejection, but prior to the date of filing a brief, will not be entered because
(a) ☐ They raise new issues that would require further consideration and/or search (see NOTE below);
(b) ☐ They raise the issue of new matter (see NOTE below);
(c) ☐ They are not deemed to place the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal; and/or
(d) ☐ They present additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims.

NOTE: _____. (See 37 CFR 1.116 and 41.33(a)).

4. ☐ The amendments are not in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121. See attached Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment (PTOL-324).
5. ☐ Applicant's reply has overcome the following rejection(s): _____.
6. ☐ Newly proposed or amended claim(s) _____ would be allowable if submitted in a separate, timely filed amendment canceling the non-allowable claim(s).
7. ☒ For purposes of appeal, the proposed amendment(s): a) ☐ will not be entered, or b) ☒ will be entered and an explanation of how the new or amended claims would be rejected is provided below or appended.

The status of the claim(s) is (or will be) as follows:

Claim(s) allowed: _____.

Claim(s) objected to: _____.

Claim(s) rejected: 1-18.

Claim(s) withdrawn from consideration: _____.

AFFIDAVIT OR OTHER EVIDENCE

8. ☐ The affidavit or other evidence filed after a final action, but before or on the date of filing a Notice of Appeal will not be entered because applicant failed to provide a showing of good and sufficient reasons why the affidavit or other evidence is necessary and was not earlier presented. See 37 CFR 1.116(e).
9. ☐ The affidavit or other evidence filed after the date of filing a Notice of Appeal, but prior to the date of filing a brief, will not be entered because the affidavit or other evidence failed to overcome all rejections under appeal and/or appellant fails to provide a showing of a good and sufficient reasons why it is necessary and was not earlier presented. See 37 CFR 41.33(d)(1).
10. ☐ The affidavit or other evidence is entered. An explanation of the status of the claims after entry is below or attached.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION/OTHER

11. ☒ The request for reconsideration has been considered but does NOT place the application in condition for allowance because:
See Continuation Sheet.
12. ☒ Note the attached Information Disclosure Statement(s). (PTO/SB/08 or PTO-1449) Paper No(s). 10/05
13. ☐ Other: _____.

PARVIZ HASSANZADEH
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

Continuation of 11. does NOT place the application in condition for allowance because: In response to applicant's arguments that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, as set forth in the prior office action, the motivation for grounding the plate electrode of Brandolf, as taught by Nobutani (Column 9, Lines 54-56), would have been to allow the electrode to better contain the plasma between itself and the active electrode, thereby better accomplishing the goals of Brandolf (Column 11, Line 45-Column 12, Line 54).

In response to applicant's argument that Brandolf and Nobutani are nonanalogous art, it has been held that a prior art reference must either be in the field of applicant's endeavor or, if not, then be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the applicant was concerned, in order to be relied upon as a basis for rejection of the claimed invention. See *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 24 USPQ2d 1443 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, both Brandolf and Nobutani are in the field of applicant's endeavor, plasma processing.

In response to applicant's argument that Brandolf and Nobutani do not teach that the plasma apparatus can be used for cleaning, a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim.

The examiner maintains that the plasma apparatus disclosed by the combination of Brandolf and Nobutani would be capable of performing plasma cleaning, based on the chosen power and other process settings. The examiner notes that plasma sputtering systems (i.e. employing sputtering targets) are commonly used for plasma etching and cleaning. (See U.S. Class 204, Subclasses 298.31+ for subject matter relating to sputter etching apparatus.) The examiner notes that whether the applied references expressly teaches any methods of plasma cleaning is not relevant to the rejection set forth in the previous office action -- what matters is the structural characteristics of the apparatus taught by the combination of Brandolf and Nobutani. In sum, the examiner maintains that the recitations of "a plasma cleaning device" and "a chamber for cleaning a process target" in Claim 1 of the instant application are recitations of intended use that the apparatus taught by the combination of Brandolf and Nobutani is capable of performing, and that the language of Claim 1 does not exclude a sputtering apparatus.

In response to applicant's argument that the modification of Brandolf by Nobutani destroys the intended function of the invention of Brandolf to arrive at the claimed invention, the examiner disagrees. The apparatus taught by the combination of Brandolf and Nobutani is a plasma apparatus that would be capable of performing either coating or cleaning, based on the process settings.

In response to applicant's argument that the apparatus taught by the combination of Brandolf and Nobutani would not be capable of being used as a replacement of cleaning using a cleaning liquid such as a freon substitute, the examiner responds that this argument is of no weight in determining the patentability of the pending claims. Moreover, the apparatus taught by the combination of Brandolf and Nobutani would be capable of performing plasma cleaning.

In response to applicant's argument that the examiner's conclusion of obviousness is based upon improper hindsight reasoning, it must be recognized that any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning. But so long as it takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, and does not include knowledge gleaned only from the applicant's disclosure, such a reconstruction is proper. See *In re McLaughlin*, 443 F.2d 1392, 170 USPQ 209 (CCPA 1971).

In response to applicant's argument that the shield member 60 taught by Brandolf is not a plate electrode, a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. The "shield member" taught by Brandolf has the same structural characteristics as the "plate electrode" recited in Claim 1 of the instant application (i.e. a conductive, sheet-like member), and thus, regardless of what it is called, meets the limitation as recited in the claim.

In regards to applicant's argument that In response to applicant's argument that the functional language in Claim 1 "provides life and meaning to the structural features of the invention," again, a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim.

The examiner does not consider Claim 1 to be a "use claim," as applicant alleges. Rather, Claim 1 is an apparatus claim with recitations of intended use that do not carry patentable weight, since the structure taught by the applied references would be capable of performing the same intended use.

In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

The examiner does not automatically subscribe to the generalizations made by applicant of the teachings of the applied references, but believes the relevant points have been discussed herein.

Maureen J. Chao